

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-SW-04-AD; Amendment 39-12736; AD 2002-09-03]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model AS332L2 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Eurocopter France (ECF) Model AS332L2 helicopters. This action requires, before further flight, verifying that the air vent is installed on the inflation cylinder of each life raft assembly. If the air vent is missing, this AD also requires replacing the cylinder head with an airworthy part before further flight. This amendment is prompted by the discovery that an inflation cylinder in the life raft did not have an air vent installed. This condition, if not corrected, could result in inadvertent life raft inflation, loss of the life raft, contact with the main or tail rotor, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Effective May 17, 2002.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before July 1, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-SW-04-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137. You may also send comments electronically to the Rules Docket at the following address: 9-asw-adcomments@faa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Carroll Wright, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Regulations Group, Fort Worth, Texas 76193-0111, telephone (817) 222-5120, fax (817) 222-5961.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (DGAC), the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on ECF Model AS332L2 helicopters. The DGAC advises of the discovery of a missing air vent on the head of the inflation cylinder of a life raft. Absence of an air vent on the cylinder head might lead to inadvertent life raft inflation and cause the life raft to be lost and to come into contact with the main or tail rotor.

ECF has issued Alert Telex No. 25.01.06, dated September 17, 2001, which specifies checking that the air vent is installed on the heads of the cylinders of the life raft assemblies. The DGAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued AD 2001-500-019(A), dated October 17, 2001, to ensure the continued airworthiness of these helicopters in France.

This helicopter model is manufactured in France and is type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of 14 CFR 21.29 and the applicable bilateral agreement. Pursuant to the applicable bilateral agreement, the DGAC has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the DGAC, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design.

This unsafe condition is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of the same type design registered in the United States. Therefore, this AD is being issued to prevent inadvertent life raft inflation, loss of the life raft, contact with the main or tail rotor, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter. This AD requires, before further flight, verifying that the air vent is installed on the head of the inflation cylinders of each life raft. If the air vent is missing, this AD also requires replacing the cylinder head with an airworthy part before further flight. Replacing the cylinder head or verifying that the air vent is installed on the heads of the inflation cylinder is terminating action for the requirements of this AD.

None of the Model AS332L2 helicopters affected by this action are on the U.S. Register. All helicopters included in the applicability of this rule are currently operated by non-U.S. operators under foreign registry; therefore, they are not directly affected by this AD action. However, the FAA considers that this rule is necessary to ensure that the unsafe condition is addressed in the event that any of these subject helicopters are imported and placed on the U.S. Register in the future.

Should an affected helicopter be imported and placed on the U.S. Register in the future, it would require approximately ½ work hour to accomplish the required actions, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of this AD would be \$30 per helicopter.

Since this AD action does not affect any helicopter that is currently on the U.S. register, it has no adverse economic impact and imposes no additional burden on any person. Therefore, notice and public procedures hereon are unnecessary and the amendment may be made effective in less than 30 days after publication in the Federal Register.

Comments Invited

Although this action is in the form of a final rule that involves requirements affecting flight safety and, thus, was not preceded by notice and an opportunity for public comment, comments are invited on this rule. Interested persons are invited to comment on this rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications should identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified under the caption ADDRESSES. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered, and this rule may be amended in light of the comments received. Factual information that supports the commenter's ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the AD action and determining whether additional rulemaking action would be needed.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the rule that might suggest a need to modify the rule. All comments submitted will be available in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report that summarizes each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this AD will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their mailed comments submitted in response to this rule must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket No. 2002-SW-04-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

The regulations adopted herein will not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, it is determined that this final rule does not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

The FAA has determined that notice and prior public comment are unnecessary in promulgating this regulation; therefore, it can be issued immediately to correct an unsafe condition in aircraft since none of these model helicopters are registered in the United States. The FAA has also determined that this regulation is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866. It has been determined further that this action involves an emergency regulation under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979). If it is determined that this emergency regulation otherwise would be significant under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures, a final regulatory evaluation will be prepared and placed in the Rules Docket. A copy of it, if filed, may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption ADDRESSES.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

Sec. 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding a new airworthiness directive to read as follows:

AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVE

Aircraft Certification Service
Washington, DC



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

We post ADs on the internet at "www.airweb.faa.gov/rgl"

The following Airworthiness Directive issued by the Federal Aviation Administration in accordance with the provisions of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 39, applies to an aircraft model of which our records indicate you may be the registered owner. Airworthiness Directives affect aviation safety and are regulations which require immediate attention. You are cautioned that no person may operate an aircraft to which an Airworthiness Directive applies, except in accordance with the requirements of the Airworthiness Directive (reference 14 CFR part 39, subpart 39.3).

2002-09-03 Eurocopter France: Amendment 39-12736. Docket No. 2002-SW-04-AD.

Applicability: Model AS332L2 helicopters, with a life raft assembly, part number 00051047 or 00051048, installed, certificated in any category.

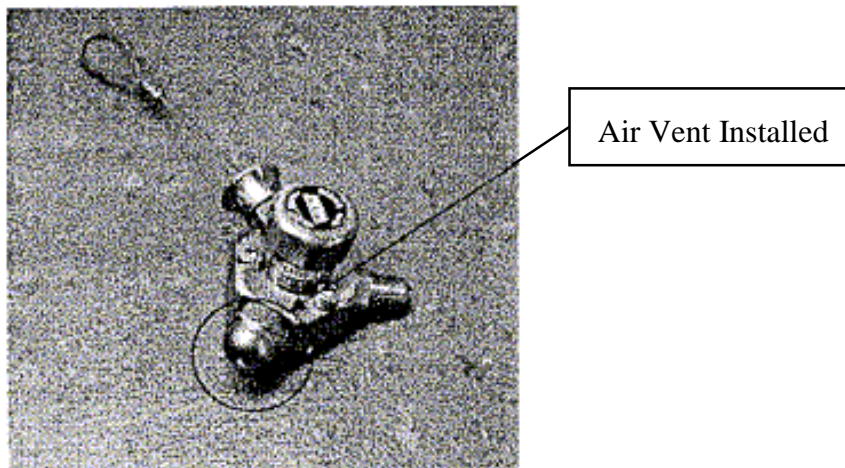
Note 1: This AD applies to each helicopter identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been otherwise modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For helicopters that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (c) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required before further flight, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent inadvertent life raft inflation, loss of the life raft, contact with the main or tail rotor, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) Verify that the air vent is installed on the head of the inflation cylinder of each lift raft assembly as shown in FIGURE 1:

Detail 1



Detail 1

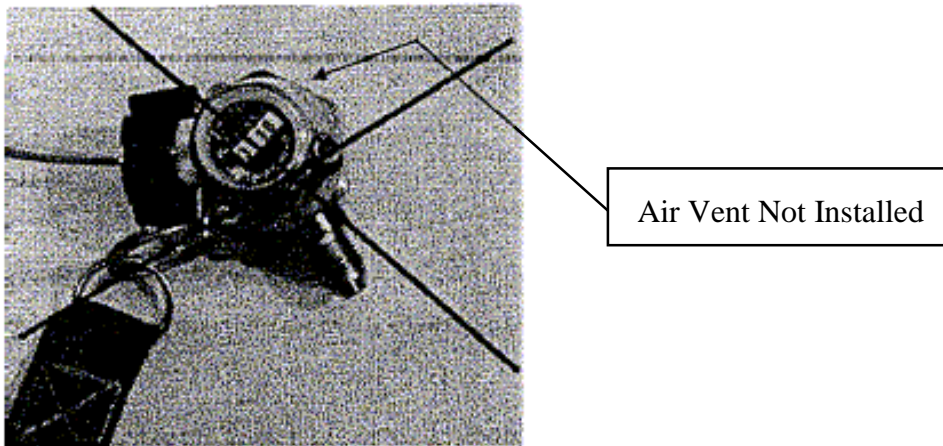


Figure 1

If the air vent is missing, replace the cylinder head with an airworthy cylinder head before further flight.

Note 2: Eurocopter France Alert Telex No. 25.01.06, dated September 17, 2001, pertains to the subject of this AD.

(b) Replacing the cylinder head or verifying that the air vent is installed on the head of the inflation cylinder is terminating action for the requirements of this AD.

(c) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Regulations Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through an FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may concur or comment and then send it to the Manager, Regulations Group.

Note 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Regulations Group.

(d) Special flight permits will not be issued.

(e) This amendment becomes effective on May 17, 2002.

Note 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (France) AD 2001-500-019(A), dated October 17, 2001.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on April 17, 2002.
Larry M. Kelly,
Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.
[FR Doc. 02-10649 Filed 5-1-02; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4910-13-P